

CHAPTER II

THE STATE

The State, in law, is a population, a territory, and an effective power of the constituted authorities acting within that territory on this population.

The **fragility of a state** is measured by low seniority of its borders, the composite character of its population, the pre-existence of strong ethnic or religious communities, and the existence of organized political minorities.

The **cohesive force of a State** is measured, conversely, by the high consistency and former religious, linguistic, political, and cultural domination of a pervasive, structured and ongoing government, under the direction of a political power.

The political leadership is not indifferent. A strong desire for unity will result in a linguistic unit imposed by a centralized state, a lack of religious tolerance, sometimes a common ideology imposed, or the cult of the head of state conveyed by the posters, the media, the school, and cinema.



We'll discuss the State community of citizens, the State administration and the State political system.

Section I.

THE STATE COMMUNITY OF CITIZENS

The group membership is for human a normal and constant trend, even better, a daily observed fact. Crossing the ocean “alone” force the admiration because the person is defeated voluntarily of protection that is around it. Even today this

loneliness is relative, because of the constant communication between the solitary and a team that follows him.

However, some ideological tradition has been built gradually over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, around the idea that the multiplicity of groups or communities makes the exercise of political power difficult, and that there is some opacities which are contrary to the necessary political transparency.

In the recent history, this claim of atomization of citizens against the power has emerged during the French Revolution. Inspired by the theories of any State and the merger of the individual in the general social whole, the claim sought to abolish the social distinctions believed to be the result of the perverse aspects of community, necessarily hierarchical, of a political, professional or religious and, for greater security, abolished by law any form of association, not wanting to know more than the **citizen**, the basic element of the Republic, the government via the constituent then legislative **Assembly**.

The disadvantages of this prohibition to build coalitions have been felt more strongly in the nineteenth century, causing the riots of workers and foremen no local organization could defend, and coups, only possibility for new political elite to take power to the former in a context where political disputes between the candidates for the elections were not conducted lawfully. The Third Republic put an end to this situation.

Therefore, the twentieth century was the century of **organizations**, both internationally and in domestic law. Modern man is so sought throughout his life by a plurality of structures, associations, trade unions, partisan, professional, religious. Note that in some countries these structures are in addition to structures like family, tribal, clan, ethnic, ...

First we distinguish the historical and political elements of the birth of a sense of belonging. Then we will discuss the symbols that help the perception of state unity.

§ 1. The historical elements

The old regime of France knew the forms of various political union bases, including the **community**, and very sure that the **professional associations**, **religious communities**, and we met there usually a strong sense of belonging to “countries” and provinces most often differentiated on linguistic, legal, glue in terms of dress customs, culinary, architectural.

The preeminence of the State as sovereign and political community primarily structured in terms of defense, police, justice and finance, around a monarch whose officers administer the entire country is developing in France as in most European countries when exchanges are intensified, due to the scientific and technical progress, and when, freed from the internal security problems in a peaceful kingdom, the king made war on the outside to gain or find a territory.

The State thus constructed from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth century, both *its borders* that will determine its size - its place in the world - and *its internal unity, its administrative organization*, financial and legal.

But the sense of belonging does not come naturally and was slow to be established especially for the inhabitants of the peripheries kingdom, and then attached to the crown several times, practicing until the late nineteenth century, different languages, having well differentiated culinary customs.

Two types of events held together the French and gave them a strong sense of belonging in the last two centuries.

First of all The Wars. Amputation of the territory by the Germans, the blood of millions of men paid for the first war, the occupation of half the territory in the second, have reinforced this sense of belonging that still feeds a sense of difference. It should be noted, moreover, that this feeling is largely irrational as it may consider that the French Alsace and Germany have greater similarities in terms of language and customs than Alsace and the rest of France.

Then the famous Republican mystic, heavily tinged with the so-called Jacobinism, named after the Jacobin Club, which was perceived as the continuation of the legacy of the centralized monarchy.

One territory, one administration, one law, one justice, were the revolutionary slogans taken and implemented by the Empire, and by successive regimes except the brief Second Republic, more liberal, until to the defeat of Sedan in 1870.

One school, carrying a single language and a single ideology - secular, republican and democratic-such was the work of the young Third Republic.

A single social security, a single rail company, one national company for energy supply, such were the main options for the Fourth Republic.

The Fifth Republic, meanwhile, rehabilitation, through its first president, the idea of political unity around the charismatic leader vested with real executive powers, ideas rejected in the two previous Republics.

These historical elements cemented the sense of community.

Now consider the acquisition of a sense of community by the perceptions of daily or less normal state by citizens.

§ 2. The symbolic elements



Membership to the State is conditioned by the **integration into the environment of the citizen as a symbol of political unity**. It is finally confronted by the existence and recall in art, literature, advertising, and film, positive **mental representations** recognized as **characteristics** of the State to which belong the citizens and who are all cultural symbols.

- The symbols of political unity:

§ **The flag** is like the “logo” of the State. It has a strong symbolic value. This is a sign of recognition of a country, the symbol of his place in the world or in such meeting or such a confederation.

§ **The national anthem** is also a great symbolic power even if its age can be problematic as the French national anthem is now being very aggressive (*impure blood water on our furrows*) to represent France in peaceful demonstrations such as the Olympic Games.

§ **Money**, formerly was remarkable in the effigy of the sovereign to publicize his face. Today, she represents various national symbols, and each country has its men and famous places on banknotes and coins. Therefore the question of whether the “euro” will have a European side and one national side at this magnitude. This touches not only a symbol of sovereignty and independence of the state but also to images that feed the sense of belonging.

§ **The motto** (*Freedom, equality, fraternity*) proudly emblazoned on the pediments of public buildings (town hall, school) was set by the 1948 Constitution, the establishment of the brief Second Republic.

§ **The Head of State.** The face, sometimes the entire silhouette, preferably in uniform or military regalia, the highest person in the country included in the official buildings and monuments in public places or on roads, airports with varying intensity depending on the type of regime.

The first perception that children have the political life of their country is the figure of the head of state.

In France, the regime of the Fifth Republic has given to the President of the Republic both the effectiveness and legitimacy of power close to that of the divine right of kings as it proceeds directly from popular election.

Note that the head of state, elected by universal suffrage, could be above the parties as provided in the speech of Charles de Gaulle in Bayeux in 1946. Recourse to universal suffrage imposed by General de Gaulle in 1962 made the head of state a party man for how to win the votes of a nation-wide without the help of a powerful mass party? Therefore, clearly belonging to a fraction of public opinion, the President runs the risk of being disavowed even while in office by a majority hand speaking on the occasion of the laws, and far from serving as arbitrator, he returned in opposition of his own government.

System defects are not only practical. This is the role of the head of state as a symbol of unity contributing effectively to the sense of community citizens who are called into question. If political change does not affect England symbol of unity which is the king or queen, this is not the case in France where the French have returned since 1974 with a tradition of clan-like pre-existing in France the monarchy and existing in a primitive form sometimes very violent in developing countries.

The monarchy, when it's a regime where a man symbolizes the unity of the state and skipping the partisan divisions can only be a symbol of this unity called by

de Gaulle as “sacred things” and that they are “away the old Gallic propensity divisions and quarrels”. It is only the figure of the head of state as a symbol of unity.

- **The cultural elements:**

The emergence of a sense of belonging is more and more everyday way again by the addiction of the palate, nose, eyes and ears to all these cultural elements in the broad sense that include cooking, painting and architecture, song and music, language.

Some of these culinary, architectural or musical specificities are used to characterize the country to outsiders and strangers, stand in a way the “identity card” of each country and, to that effect, become highly symbolic.

The evocation of each country, each state, at least among the oldest and most famous, creates **mental representations**, which combine historical elements. It should be noted that each country is so **identified**, then **differentiated**, but also connected to the world through his personal contribution to the “**common heritage of humanity**”.

The problem with Europe is that it currently has in its member countries the *smaller* but also the *better identified* countries, due to longstanding stability of their borders, their traditions, their lifestyles. It is therefore difficult to create a culture permitting the people in Europe to identify themselves as Europeans. The feeling of belonging can not be based on the assimilation of the addition of all these cultures and their integration at an early stage of development of the individual in his reference system. If, on some level, assimilation is made, it can be done only by other areas as school, learning languages, foreign literatures, and “exchanges”.